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ABSTRACT

Thirty-seven employers of clerical personnel were surveyed to determine necessary skills, education, and experience for the positions of clerk/receptionist, clerk/stenographer, secretary, and administrative assistant. The results suggest that at least a high school diploma, typing speed, and one-two years of experience are considered necessary by a high percentage of employers for all four clerical positions. The current Secretarial Careers Program emphasizes preparations for the Certified Professional Secretary (CPS) examination. The high percentage of students obtaining employment prior to the completion of the two-year program raised a question as to whether employers wanted and were willing to pay for office staff with the skills of a CPS. Data indicated 75 percent were not familiar with the term at all. Two recommendations were made: (1) to begin to plan for the development of a shortened program, and (2) to make employers more aware of the skills of a Certified Professional Secretary. Tabular data and the survey instrument are appended. (Author/MJK)

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SKILLS, EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE FOR CLERICAL STAFF: A SURVEY OF SOUTHERN METROPOLITAN KANSAS CITY AREA EMPLOYERS

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PREFACE

Previous research has shown that many students leave the secretarial program prior to graduation, and that they are able to find employment in their field of study. The purpose of this study was to determine whether there is a need for a shortened intense program in addition to the existing two-year secretarial program.

At the request of the secretarial staff, the Office of Institutional Research cooperated in conducting a survey of area companies which hire clerical staff. Mrs. Peggy Scheloski and Mrs. Jean Smith provided the input for the development of the survey instrument. The students in the Secretarial Field Study course taught by Mrs. Jean Smith did the interviewing. Under the direction of the writer and Mr. Robert Watkins, the Secretarial Field Study students tallied the data obtained from the interviews. Mrs. Diana Kelley assisted with the preparation of this final report.

Elaine L. Tatham
Director of Institutional Research

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SKILLS, EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE FOR CLERICAL STAFF: A SURVEY OF SOUTHERN METROPOLITAN KANSAS CITY EMPLOYERS

I. INTRODUCTION

Secretaries are currently very much in demand in the Kansas City area. The secretarial staff at JCCC felt that this high demand has had an impact on the number of students completing the secretarial career program. The majority of students do not complete the program. Yet, students who leave the program prior to graduation but with marketable skills are finding employment in secretarial fields. Over eighty percent of students in the secretarial program who either graduate or leave with a marketable skill were employed in secretarial related work (Career Student Follow-up, 1972 and 1973 Career Student Follow-up: Initial Placement). The current Secretarial Careers Program emphasizes preparation for the Certified Professional Secretary (CPS) examination. The high percentage of students obtaining employment prior to the completion of the two year program raised a question as to whether employers wanted and were willing to pay for office staff with the skills of a CPS.

II. PURPOSE

The purpose of this study was to obtain opinions from employers of clerical staff as to what skills, education and experience were necessary or desirable for the positions of clerk/receptionist, clerk/stenographer, secretary and administrative assistant. In addition, employer opinions were sought concerning Certified Professional Secretaries.

III. METHODOLOGY

Questionnaire

The questionnaire was developed by the JCCC secretarial staff in cooperation with the College research staff. A copy of the questionnaire is included in Appendix A. It should be noted that each of the four clerical positions was defined on the survey instrument.

Selected Companies

The employers were selected at random from the 1973 *Contacts Influential*. Seventy companies were selected with offices located within 34 zip zones in southern Metropolitan Kansas City specified by the secretarial staff. The sample was stratified with respect to the size of the company. Company size ranged from five or fewer employees to over 500 employees. The sample size of 70 was selected so that for reporting percentages, the obtained percentages would be within ten percent of the population percentages at the 0.90 level of confidence.

Procedure

A letter (Appendix A) was sent from President Harris to each of the 70 employers explaining the survey and informing the employer that a student in the secretarial program would be contacting them. The students in the Secretarial Field Study class were instructed in some basic interviewing procedures by a member of the research staff. Each student telephoned for an appointment at the employer's convenience.

Responses

Complete responses were obtained from 37 businesses. Partial responses were obtained from two companies by telephone for the first two questions. The responses were typically given by vice presidents, personnel officers and secretaries. No responses were obtained from 31 companies, partly because the companies concerned stated they did not have sufficient staff or time to participate in such an activity and partly because the student interviewers may not have tried very hard to secure an appointment.

The 37 participating businesses employed clerical staff as follows:

- Seventy-five percent employed nine or less clerical personrel.
- Eleven percent employed 10-19 clerical personnel.
- Three percent employed 20-29 clerical personnel.
- Eleven percent employed 50 or more clerical personnel.

IV. SURVEY RESULTS: JOB ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Most of the companies surveyed did not employ clerical personnel in all four positions (clerk/receptionist, clerk/stenographer, secretary and administrative assistant). As a result, most respondents did not answer questions pertaining to all four clerical positions. Respondents typically answered only those questions pertaining to positions available in their own companies. Seventy-eight percent responded to the clerk/receptionist questions, 68 percent responded to the clerk/stenographer questions, 84 percent to the secretarial questions and 54 percent to the administrative assistant questions. Tables 12-15 in Appendix B use the format of the survey instrument to present the percentage of employers rating a specified skill, education or experience characteristic as necessary or desirable.

For each of the four clerical positions, Tables 3-6 present the percentage of employers rating a specified skill, education or experience as necessary for each position. For typing speed, shorthand speed, accounting courses, education and experience, the percentage reported in Tables 3-6 is the percentage rating that characteristic a minimum employment prerequisite. For example, if the typing speeds rated necessary for a clerk/receptionist are considered, three percent rated 30-39 words/minute as necessary, 38 percent rated 40-49 words/minute as necessary and 17 percent rated 50-59 words/minute as necessary. When aggregated, 55 percent (38% + 17%) rated typing *at least* 40-49 words/minute as necessary. A further aggregation reveals that 58 percent (3% + 38% + 17%) rated typing *at least* 30-39 words/minute as necessary. If percentages are not aggregated for these items in the rankings, the data can be misleading. This can be illustrated by comparing the necessary education for a clerk/receptionist (Appendix B) and an administrative assistant (Appendix B). Eighty-six percent of the employers considered a high school diploma necessary for a clerk/receptionist. For an administrative assistant, 65 percent considered a high school diploma necessary, 15 percent considered one

year of college (secretarial) necessary and 15 percent considered four years of college necessary. So 95 percent (65% + 15% + 15%) considered *at least* a high school diploma necessary. The 86% for a clerk/receptionist must be compared to 95% (not 65%) for an administrative assistant.

For each characteristic, the percentage rating the characteristic as necessary was added to the percentage rating it as desirable. These percentages indicate a different perspective of the characteristics that employers are looking for when hiring clerical staff. These characteristics ranked by the percentage of employers considering the skill, level of education or experience to be necessary and/or desirable are presented in Tables 7-10.

Clerk/receptionist

Employers rated the following as the three most necessary characteristics (Table 3):

- *At least* a high school diploma (86%)
- Telephone techniques (59%)
- Typing *at least* 30-39 words/minute (58%). *At least* 40-49 words/minute was specified by 55%.

Approximately one-third indicated they would hire someone with no experience.

When the percentage rating a characteristic as desirable is added to the percentage rating it as necessary, employers rated the following as the five most necessary or desirable characteristics (Table 7):

- High school diploma (89%)
- Telephone techniques (80%)
- Capable of setting up a filing system (69%)
- Alphabetic records management (66%)
- One to two years experience (62%)

Less than ten percent of the employers considered the following characteristics as necessary or desirable:

- Typing 70 or more words/minute
- Shorthand at 100 or more words/minute

- One semester or more of college accounting
- Six or more years experience
- Four or more years of college

Clerk/stenographer

Employers rated the following as the three most necessary characteristics (Table 4):

- *At least* a high school diploma (92%)
- Typing *at least* 30-39 words/minute (72%). *At least* 40-49 words/minute was specified by 68% and *at least* 50-59 words/minute was specified by 56%
- *At least* one or two years experience (52%)

Approximately one-fifth of the employers indicated they would hire someone with no experience.

When the percentage rating a characteristic as desirable is added to the percentage rating it as necessary, employers rated the following as the five most necessary or desirable characteristics (Table 8):

- One or two years experience (84%)
- High school diploma (80%)
- Capable of setting up a filing system (80%)
- Telephone techniques (80%)
- Limited knowledge of ten-key adding machine (64%)

Less than ten percent of the employers considered the following characteristics as necessary or desirable:

- Typing 70 or more words/minute
- Two or more semesters of college accounting
- Six or more years experience
- Four or more years of college

Secretary

Employers rated the following as the five most necessary characteristics (Table 5):

- *At least* a high school diploma (83%). Sixteen percent considered *at least* two years of college (secretarial) necessary.
- *At least* one or two years experience (80%). Thirty-two percent considered *at least* three to five years experience necessary.
- Typing *at least* 30-39 words/minute (80%). Seventy-seven percent considered *at least* 40-49 words/minute necessary while 71 percent considered *at least* 50-59 words/minute necessary.
- Shorthand *at least* 40-59 words/minute (64%). Fifty-eight percent considered *at least* 60-79 words/minute necessary, 39 percent considered *at least* 80-99 words/minute necessary, and 10 percent considered 100 or more words/minute necessary.

Approximately ten percent will hire someone with no experience.

When the percentage rating a characteristic as desirable is added to the percentage rating it as necessary, employers rated the following as the five most necessary or desirable characteristics (Table 9):

- Capable of setting up a filing system (93%)
- Telephone techniques (84%)
- Alphabetic records management (78%)
- One or two years experience (67%)
- Numeric records management (65%)

Less than ten percent of the employers considered the following characteristics as necessary or desirable:

- Two or more semesters of college accounting
- Six years of college

Administrative Assistant

Employers rated the following as the five most necessary characteristics (Table 6):

- *At least* a high school diploma (95%). Thirty percent considered *at least* one year of college (secretarial) necessary and 15 percent considered *at least* four years of college necessary.

- *At least* one or two years experience (70%). Forty-five percent considered *at least* three to five years experience necessary and five percent considered *at least* ten years experience necessary.

- Capable of setting up a filing system (70%).

- Typing *at least* 30-39 words/minute (55%). Fifty percent considered *at least* 40-49 words/minute necessary, 45 percent considered *at least* 50-59 words/minute necessary, 15 percent considered *at least* 60-69 words/minute necessary and 10 percent considered *at least* 70 words/minute necessary.

Approximately five percent will hire someone with no experience.

When the percentage rating a characteristic as desirable is added to the percentage rating it as necessary, employers rated the following as the six most necessary or desirable characteristics (Table 10):

- Capable of setting up a filing system (100%)

- Telephone techniques (80%)

- Personnel management course (75%)

- Alphabetic records management (70%)

- Business Law I (65%)

- Three to five years experience (65%)

V. COMPARISON OF RESULTS FOR CLERICAL POSITIONS

Education

The employers considered *at least* a high school diploma to be the most necessary of all the specified characteristics for all four clerical positions. The percentage of employers considering *at least* a high school diploma necessary for each position were: clerk/receptionist (86%), clerk/stenographer (92%), secretary (83%) and administrative assistant (95%). The employers considered *at least* one year of college secretarial training progressively more necessary from the position of clerk/receptionist to that of administrative assistant.

These percentages were: clerk/receptionist (0%), clerk/stenographer (12%), secretary (22%) and administrative assistant (30%). There was a trend towards progressive emphasis on higher levels of education (2 years secretarial training and 4 years college) from the position of clerk/receptionist through administrative assistant. None of the employers considered six years of college necessary (Tables 3-6).

Experience

Employers considered *at least* one to two years experience necessary for the positions of clerk/stenographer (52%), secretary (80%) and administrative assistant (70%) but only 24 percent considered this level of experience necessary for a clerk/receptionist. *At least* three to five years experience was considered necessary by 32 percent of the employers for a secretary and 45 percent of the employers for an administrative assistant (Tables 3-6).

Typing

Employers considered the ability to type *at least* 30-39 words/minute to be a necessary skill for each of the clerical positions. These percentages were: clerk/receptionist (58%), clerk/stenographer (72%), secretary (80%) and administrative assistant (55%). The ability to type at rates faster than 30-39 words/minute was considered progressively more necessary for the positions of clerk/receptionist through secretary. For example, the ability to type *at least* 50-59 words/minute was considered necessary by 17 percent of the employers for a clerk/receptionist, by 56 percent for a clerk/stenographer, and by 71 percent for a secretary. The ability to type *at least* 50-59 words/minute was considered to be necessary for an administrative assistant by 45 percent of the employers (Tables 3-6).

Shorthand

The employers considered the ability to take shorthand *at least* 40-59 words/minute progressively more necessary from the position of clerk/receptionist

through secretary. These percentages were: clerk/receptionist (17%), clerk/stenographer (48%) and secretary (64%). The ability to take shorthand *at least* 40-59 words/minute was considered necessary by 25 percent of the employers for the administrative assistant. Shorthand rates faster than 40-59 words/minute were considered necessary by more employers for the position of secretary than for the other three positions (Tables 3-6).

Filing

The employers considered the capability of setting up a filing system as progressively more necessary from the position of clerk/receptionist to that of administrative assistant. The percentage of employers considering this skill necessary were: clerk/receptionist (14%), clerk/stenographer (36%), secretary (61%) and administrative assistant (70%).

Other Characteristics

Telephone technique skills were considered necessary by a large percentage of the employers for each of the four clerical positions. These skills were considered most necessary for a clerk/receptionist. The percentages were: clerk/receptionist (59%), clerk/stenographer (40%), secretary (55%) and administrative assistant (45%). *At least* limited knowledge of the ten-key adding machine was considered by employers to be relatively more necessary for the positions of clerk/stenographer and administrative assistant (52% and 35% respectively) than for the positions of clerk/receptionist and secretary (17% and 24% respectively). A relatively low percentage of the employers considered courses in high school bookkeeping, college accounting, personnel management and Business Law I necessary. In each case, the percentage of the employers considering these courses necessary was highest for the administrative assistant.

VI. OTHER SURVEY FINDINGS

Entry Level Salary

Average monthly entry level salaries for the four clerical positions in the surveyed businesses were as follows: clerk/receptionist ($454), clerk/stenographer ($465), secretary ($509) and administrative assistant ($628). These results are presented in Table 1 together with the low, high and median monthly entry level salaries for each position.

Personality Traits

The employers were asked to select from a list the five most important qualities looked for in an applicant for a clerical job. The five personality traits selected most often and the percentage of the employers selecting them were: effective communications (78%), attitude (76%), intelligence (70%), appearance (54%) and maturity (49%). Four personality traits not included in the survey list were written in by employers. These four qualities and the percentage of employers suggesting them were: dependability (5%), punctuality (5%), compatibility (5%) and absence record (3%). Since these traits were written in, the relatively low percentage of employers associated with them may not reflect the actual percentage of the employers considering these traits important. More complete data on this survey item are presented in Table 2.

Certified Professional Secretaries

Only 25 percent of the employers were familiar with the term Certified Professional Secretary. None of the employers responded that they currently employ certified professional secretaries. Nineteen percent were unsure and 81 percent responded that they did not currently employ anyone with a CPS rank. Seventeen percent of the employers responded that they would prefer an applicant to have attained a CPS rank. Forty-two percent did not know while forty-one percent were sure they would not prefer an applicant with a CPS rank. Twenty-nine

percent of the employers responded that they would offer a CPS a higher salary in contrast to an applicant without a CPS rank. Twelve percent of the employers did not know, while 59% were sure a CPS would not be offered a higher salary than an applicant without a CPS rank.

VII. SUMMARY

Thirty-seven employers of clerical personnel were surveyed to determine necessary skills, education and experience for the positions of clerk/receptionist, clerk/stenographer, secretary and administrative assistant. Students in the spring 1974 JCCC Secretarial Field Study course conducted the interviews. The results suggest that *at least* a high school diploma, typing speed and one to two years of experience are considered necessary by a high percentage of the employers for all four clerical positions. Other characteristics such as capability of setting up a filing system, telephone technique, courses in bookkeeping, Business Law I and personnel management were considered more necessary for some positions than others.

Only a small percentage of the employers are familiar with the rank of Certified Professional Secretary. The data obtained in the survey indicated that 75 percent were not familiar with the term. Employers need to be made more aware of the rank and the skills possessed by a Certified Professional Secretary. Although 59% responded that they would not offer a higher salary to an individual with a CPS rank, 29% would pay more and 12% did not know. It may be concluded that some employers are interested in hiring Certified Professional Secretaries. The data in this study also indicate that many employers put more emphasis on experience than on education beyond one year of college (secretarial). Some positions require two or more years of college but they seem to be in the minority.

VIII. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on this study and earlier research, the following two recommendations are made:

- After determining the feasibility of augmenting the current two-year program, the secretarial staff should begin planning for the development of a shortened program.
- If the secretarial staff feel that the rank of Certified Professional Secretary (CPS) is worthwhile, employers in the southern metropolitan Kansas City area need to be made aware of the skills possessed by a secretary with the rank of a CPS.

Students conducting interviews in future surveys should be referred to as "representatives of the college" rather than students. Employers may be more responsive and willing to be of assistance. Secondly, the interviewer should make the initial contact in person, not by telephone. It is easier to refuse an interview over the telephone than in person.

TABULAR DATA

TABLE 1

ENTRY LEVEL MONTHLY SALARY DATA FOR FOUR OFFICE JOBS

Job	Low	High	Average	Median
Clerk/Receptionist	$305	$675	$454	$405
Clerk/Stenographer	325	740	465	450
Secretary	325	750	509	500
Administrative Assistant	350	1000	628	600

TABLE 2

PERSONALITY TRAITS MOST
VALUED BY EMPLOYERS

Personality Traits	Percentage of Employers Responding
Effective Communications	78%
Attitude	76%
Intelligence	70%
Appearance	54%
Maturity	49%
Tactfulness	38%
Grooming	32%
Loyalty	24%
Sense of Humor	16%
Voice Quality	16%
Earnestness	14%
Others: (suggested by the surveyed employers)*	
Dependability	5%
Punctuality	5%
Compatability	3%
Absence Record	3%

* Since these traits were written in, the relatively low percentage of employers associated with them may not reflect the actual percentage of the employers considering these traits important.

Note.--Employers were requested to select the five most important personality traits looked for during the first interview.

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TABLE 3

SKILLS, LEVELS OF EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE
RANKED BY PERCENTAGE OF EMPLOYERS
WHO CONSIDERED THEM NECESSARY
FOR A CLERK/RECEPTIONIST

Characteristics	Percentage of Employers Considering Necessary
At least a high school diploma	86%
Telephone technique	59%
Typing at least 30-39 words/min.	58%
Typing at least 40-49 words/min.	55%
Records management - alphabetic	38%
0 years experience	34%
Switchboard	31%
At least 1-2 years experience	24%
Records management - numeric	21%
Typing at least 50-59 words/min.	17%
Ten-key - at least limited knowledge	17%
Shorthand - at least 40-49 words/min.	17%
Records management - subject	17%
Capable of setting up filing system	14%
At least high school bookkeeping	13%
Shorthand - at least 60-79 words/min.	10%
Ten-key proficiency	10%
Transcribing machine training	10%
Shorthand - at least 80-89 words/min.	10%
Records management - geographic	7%
At least 1 semester college accounting	6%
MTST training	3%
Data base filing	3%
At least 2 semesters college accounting	3%
Duplicating machine training	1%
More than 2 semesters college accounting	0%
At least 3-5 years experience	0%
Personnel management course	0%
Business Law I	0%
Typing at least 60-69 words/min.	0%
Mag card training	0%
At least 1 year college (secretarial)	0%
At least two years college (secretarial)	0%
Shorthand 100+ words/min.	0%
Typing 70+ words/min.	0%
At least 6-9 years experience	0%
10 years experience	0%
At least 4 years college	0%
6 years college	0%

Note.--For typing speed, shorthand speed, ten-key skills, accounting courses, education and experience the percentage reported is the percentage requiring that characteristic as minimal. For example, consider the typing speeds rated necessary for a clerk/receptionist (Appendix B). Three percent rated 30-39 words/minute as necessary, 38 percent rated 40-49 words/minute as necessary and 17 percent rated 50-59 words/minute as necessary. When aggregated, 55 percent (38% + 17%) rated typing at least 40-49 words/minute as necessary. A further aggregation reveals that 58 percent (3% + 38% + 17%) rated typing at least 30-39 words/minute as necessary.

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TABLE 4

SKILLS, LEVELS OF EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE
RANKED BY PERCENTAGE OF EMPLOYERS
WHO CONSIDERED THEM NECESSARY
FOR A CLERK/STENOGRAPHER

Characteristics	Percentage of Employers Considering Necessary
At least a high school diploma	92%
Typing at least 30-39 words/min.	72%
Typing at least 40-49 words/min.	68%
Typing at least 50-59 words/min.	56%
At least 1-2 years experience	52%
Shorthand - at least 40-59 words/min.	48%
Records management - alphabetic	44%
Telephone techniques	40%
Capable of setting up filing system	36%
Transcribing	36%
Shorthand - at least 60-79 words/min.	36%
Records management - numeric	32%
Ten-key - at least limited knowledge	24%
Duplicating machine training	24%
0 years experience	20%
Records management - subject	16%
Typing at least 60-69 words/min.	16%
Shorthand - at least 80-89 words/min.	16%
High school bookkeeping	16%
At least 1 year college (secretarial)	12%
Switchboard	8%
At least 3-5 years experience	8%
Records management - geographic	8%
MTST training	8%
At least 1 semester college accounting	4%
At least 2 years college (secretarial)	4%
Mag card training	4%
Records management - data base filing	4%
Shorthand 100+ words/min.	4%
Personnel management course	0%
Ten-key proficiency	0%
Business Law I	0%
Typing - 70+ words/min.	0%
At least 2 semesters college accounting	0%
At least 6-9 years experience	0%
10+ years experience	0%
More than 2 semesters college accounting	0%
At least 4 years of college	0%
6 years of college	0%

Note.--For typing speed, shorthand speed, ten-key skills, accounting courses, education and experience the percentage reported is the percentage considering that characteristic a prerequisite. For example, consider the levels of education rated necessary for a clerk/stenographer (Appendix B). Eighty percent rated a high school diploma as necessary, 8 percent rated 1 year of college (secretarial) as necessary, and 4 percent rated 2 years of college (secretarial) as necessary. When aggregated, 12 percent (8% + 4%) rated <u>at least</u> 1 year of college (secretarial) as necessary. A further aggregation reveals that 92 percent (80% + 8% + 4%) consider <u>at least</u> a high school diploma as necessary.

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TABLE 5

SKILLS, LEVELS OF EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE
RANKED BY PERCENTAGE OF EMPLOYERS
WHO CONSIDERED THEM NECESSARY
FOR A SECRETARY

Characteristics	Percentage of Employers Considering Necessary
At least a high school diploma	83%
At least 1-2 years experience	80%
Typing at least 30-39 words/min.	80%
Typing at least 40-49 words/min.	77%
Typing at least 50-59 words/min.	71%
Shorthand - at least 40-59 words/min.	64%
Capable of setting up filing system	61%
Shorthand - at least 60-79 words/min.	58%
Telephone technique	55%
Records management - alphabetic	55%
Ten-key - at least limited knowledge	52%
Records management - numeric	42%
Typing at least 60-69 words/min.	42%
Shorthand - at least 80-99 words/min.	39%
At least high school bookkeeping	32%
At least 3-5 years experience	32%
Transcribing machine trainging	29%
Duplicating machine training	29%
Ten-key proficiency	23%
Records management - subject	23%
At least 1 year college (secretarial)	22%
Switchboard	20%
Records management - geographic	19%
At least 2 years college (secretarial)	16%
Typing 70+ words/min.	13%
At least 6-9 years experience	13%
0 years experience	10%
Shorthand - 100+ words/min.	10%
Mag card training	6%
Business Law I	6%
At least 1 semester college accounting	6%
At least 2 semesters college accounting	6%
More than 2 semesters college accounting	3%
At least 4 years of college	3%
MTST training	3%
Personnel management course	3%
Records management - data base filing	3%
6 years college	0%
10+ years experience	0%

Note.--For typing speed, shorthand speed, ten-key skills, accounting courses, education and experience the percentage reported is the percentage considering that characteristic a prerequisite. For example, consider the level of ten-key skill rated necessary for a secretary (Appendix B). Twenty-nine percent rated limited knowledge of ten-key as necessary and 23 percent rated proficiency of ten-key as necessary. When aggregated 52 percent (29% + 23%) rated at least limited knowledge of ten-key as necessary.

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TABLE 6

SKILLS, LEVELS OF EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE
RANKED BY PERCENTAGE OF EMPLOYERS WHO
CONSIDERED THEM NECESSARY FOR
AN ADMISISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

Characteristics	Percentage of Employers Considering Necessary
At least a high school diploma	95%
At least 1-2 years experience	70%
Capable of setting up a file system	70%
Typing at least 30-39 words/min.	55%
At least high school bookkeeping	55%
Typing at least 40-49 words/min.	50%
At least 3-5 years experience	45%
Typing at least 50-59 words/min.	45%
Telephone technique	40%
Ten-key - at least limited knowledge	35%
Personnel management course	35%
Records management - alphabetic	35%
Records management - numeric	30%
At least 1 semester college accounting	30%
At least 1 year college (secretarial)	30%
Shorthand - at least 40-59 words/min.	25%
Ten-key proficiency	25%
Records management - subject	25%
At least 2 semesters college accounting	25%
Shorthand - at least 60-79 words/min.	20%
Duplicating machine training	20%
Typing at least 60-69 words/min.	15%
Transcribing training	15%
Business Law I	15%
Records management - geographic	15%
More than 2 semesters college accounting	15%
At least 2 years of college (secretarial)	15%
At least 4 years college (secretarial)	15%
Typing 70+ words/min.	10%
Mag card training	10%
Records management - data base filing	10%
At least 6-9 years experience	10%
Shorthand - at least 80-99 words/min.	5%
10+ years experience	5%
0 years experience	5%
Shorthand 100+ words/min.	0%
Switchboard	0%
MTST	0%
6 years college	0%

Note.--For typing speed, shorthand speed, ten-key skills, accounting courses, education and experience the percentage reported is the percentage considering that characteristic a prerequisite. For example, consider the levels of shorthand speed rated necessary for an administrative assistant (Appendix B). Five percent rated 40-59 words/minute as necessary, 15 percent rated 60-79 words/minute as necessary and 5 percent rated 80-99 words/minute as necessary. When aggregated, 20 percent (5% + 15%) rated shorthand at least 60-79 words/minute as necessary. A further aggregation reveals that 25 percent (5% + 15% + 5%) rated shorthand at least 40-59 words/minute as necessary.

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TABLE 7

SKILLS, LEVELS OF EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE RANKED BY PERCENTAGE OF EMPLOYERS WHO CONSIDERED THEM NECESSARY OR DESIRABLE FOR A CLERK/RECEPTIONIST

Characteristics	Percentage of Employers Responding	
	Necessary plus Desirable	Necessary
High school diploma	89%	86%
Telephone techniques	80%	59%
Capable of setting up filing system	69%	14%
Records management - alphabetic	66%	38%
1-2 years experience	62%	24%
Records management - numeric	55%	21%
Switchboard	52%	31%
Typing 40-49 words/min.	52%	38%
Ten-key - limited knowledge	52%	7%
Typing 50-59 words/min.	51%	17%
High school bookkeeping	48%	7%
Records management - subject	41%	17%
0 years experience	41%	34%
1 year college (secretarial)	38%	0%
Duplicating machine training	32%	1%
Transcribing machine training	31%	10%
Shorthand 40-59 words/min.	31%	7%
3-5 years experience	31%	0%
Records management - geographic	28%	7%
MTST training	17%	3%
Personnel management course	17%	0%
Ten-key proficiency	17%	10%
Business Law I	14%	0%
Data base filing	13%	3%
Typing 30-39 words/min.	10%	3%
Typing 60-69 words/min.	10%	0%
Shorthand 80-99 words/min.	10%	10%
Mag card training	10%	0%
2 years college (secretarial)	10%	0%
Shorthand 100+ words/min.	7%	0%
Shorthand 60-79 words/min.	7%	0%
Accounting (college - 1 semester)	6%	3%
Typing 70+ words/min.	3%	0%
Accounting (college - 2 semesters)	3%	3%
Accounting (college - more than 2 semesters)	3%	3%
6-9 years experience	3%	0%
10+ years experience	3%	0%
4 years of college	0%	0%
6 years of college	0%	0%

TABLE 8

SKILLS, LEVELS OF EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE RANKED BY PERCENTAGE OF EMPLOYERS WHO CONSIDERED THEM NECESSARY OR DESIRABLE FOR

A CLERK/STENOGRAPHER

Characteristics	Percentage of Employers Responding	
	Necessary plus Desirable	Necessary
1-2 years experience	84%	44%
High school diploma	80%	80%
Capable of setting up filing system	80%	36%
Telephone techniques	80%	40%
Ten-key - limited knowledge	64%	24%
Typing 50-59 words/min.	60%	40%
Records management - alphabetic	56%	44%
Transcribing machine training	56%	36%
Records management - numeric	52%	32%
Shorthand 60-79 words/min.	48%	20%
Duplicating machine training	48%	24%
1 year college (secretarial)	44%	8%
Switchboard	40%	8%
High school bookkeeping	40%	12%
3-5 years experience	36%	8%
Records management - subject	36%	16%
Typing 60-69 words/min.	36%	16%
Records management - geographic	32%	8%
MTST training	28%	8%
Shorthand 80-99 words/min.	24%	12%
Personnel management course	24%	0%
Accounting (college - 1 semester)	24%	4%
2 years college (secretarial)	24%	4%
0 years experience	24%	20%
Ten-key proficiency	20%	0%
Mag card training	20%	4%
Business Law I	20%	0%
Data base filing	20%	4%
Shorthand 40-59 words/min.	16%	12%
Typing 40-49 words/min.	12%	12%
Shorthand 100+ words/min.	12%	4%
Typing 30-39 words/min.	8%	4%
Typing 70+ words/min.	8%	0%
Accounting (college - 2 semesters)	4%	0%
6-9 years experience	4%	0%
10+ years experience	4%	0%
Accounting (college - more than 2 semesters)	0%	0%
4 years of college	0%	0%
6 years of college	0%	0%

TABLE 9

SKILLS, LEVELS OF EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE RANKED BY PERCENTAGE OF EMPLOYERS WHO CONSIDERED THEM NECESSARY OR DESIRABLE FOR A SECRETARY

Characteristics	Percentage of Employers Responding	
	Necessary plus Desirable	Necessary
Capable of setting up filing system	93%	61%
Telphone techniques	84%	55%
Records management - alphabetic	78%	55%
1-2 years experience	67%	48%
Records management - numeric	65%	42%
High school diploma	64%	61%
Duplicating machine training	58%	29%
High school bookkeeping	58%	26%
Switchboard	55%	20%
Typing 60-69 words/min.	52%	29%
Ten-key - limited knowledge	52%	29%
Transcribing training	52%	29%
3-5 years experience	51%	19%
Shorthand 80-99 words/min.	42%	29%
Records management - geographic	42%	19%
Records management - subject	42%	23%
1 year college (secretarial)	41%	6%
Shorthand 100+ words/min.	39%	10%
Ten-key proficiency	36%	23%
Typing 50-59 words/min.	35%	29%
Business Law I	32%	6%
Typing 70+ words/min.	32%	13%
Personnel management course	32%	3%
Accounting (college - 1 semester)	29%	0%
2 years of college (secretarial)	29%	13%
MTST training	26%	3%
6-9 years experience	23%	13%
Shorthand 60-79 words/min.	22%	19%
Data base filing	22%	3%
Shorthand 40-59 words/min.	16%	6%
4 years of college	13%	3%
0 years experience	13%	10%
10+ years experience	13%	0%
Mag card training	12%	6%
Typing 40-49 words/min.	6%	6%
Accounting (college - more than 2 semesters)	6%	3%
Accounting (college - 2 semesters)	3%	3%
6 years of college	3%	0%
Typing 30-39 words/min.	3%	3%

TABLE 10

SKILLS, LEVELS OF EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE RANKED BY PERCENTAGE OF EMPLOYERS WHO CONSIDERED THEM NECESSARY OR DESIRABLE FOR AN ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

Characteristics	Percentage of Employers Responding	
	Necessary Plus Desirable	Necessary
Capable of setting up filing system	100%	70%
Telephone techniques	80%	40%
Personnel management course	75%	35%
Records management - alphabetic	70%	35%
Business Law I	65%	15%
High school diploma	65%	65%
3-5 years experience	65%	35%
Records management - numeric	60%	30%
Duplicating machine training	55%	20%
Transcribing machine training	50%	15%
Ten-key - limited knowledge	45%	10%
Switchboard	45%	0%
Records management - geographic	45%	15%
Records management - subject	45%	25%
1-2 years experience	45%	25%
Typing 50-59 words/min.	40%	30%
Typing 60-69 words/min.	35%	5%
Ten-key proficiency	35%	25%
Data base filing	35%	10%
High school bookkeeping	35%	25%
4 years of college	35%	15%
1 year of college (secretarial)	30%	15%
Typing 70+ words/min.	25%	10%
Shorthand 60-79 words/min.	25%	15%
Accounting (college - 2 semesters)	25%	10%
Shorthand 100+ words/min.	25%	0%
MTST training	25%	0%
Accounting (college - more than 2 semesters)	25%	15%
2 years of college (secretarial)	25%	0%
10+ years experience	25%	5%
Mag card training	20%	10%
Accounting (college - 1 semester)	20%	5%
Shorthand 40-59 words/min.	15%	5%
Shorthand 80-89 words/min.	10%	5%
0 years experience	10%	5%
6-9 years experience	10%	5%
Typing 30-39 words/min.	5%	5%
Typing 40-49 words/min.	5%	5%
6 years of college	0%	0%

TABLE 11

EMPLOYER OPINIONS CONCERNING CERTIFIED PROFESSIONAL SECRETARIES

Item	Percentage
Familiar with term Certified Professional Secretary (CPS):	
Yes	25%
No	75%
Have Certified Professional Secretaries in organization:	
Yes	0%
No	81%
Don't know	19%
Would prefer applicant to have attained rank of CPS:	
Yes	17%
No	41%
Don't know	42%
If applicant with a CPS were available, would offer such an individual a higher salary in contrast to an applicant without a CPS rank:	
Yes	29%
No	59%
Don't know	12%

APPENDIX A

1. Letter to Employers

2. Survey Instrument

We are in the process of evaluating the secretarial curriculum at Johnson County Community College and would appreciate your advising us of the current job requirements for your office personnel.

Within the next two weeks, a student in our secretarial program will be contacting you. The student will set up an appointment at your convenience. She will ask you to complete a survey form regarding job requirements for office personnel. This will take approximately 20 minutes of your time.

If there is another individual who is in charge of hiring office personnel, we would appreciate your directing the student to the individual who has that responsibility.

We sincerely appreciate your cooperation in helping to complete this survey. Thank you.

Sincerely yours,

Dr. Robert G. Harris
President

SECRETARIAL CAREERS SURVEY

JOHNSON COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Please answer the following questions.

1. Number of clerical/office personnel in your organization

_____0-9 _____10-19 _____20-29 _____30-39 _____40-49 _____50+

2. Please indicate the monthly entry level salary for the following jobs.

Clerk/receptionist $_____

Clerk/stenographer $_____

Secretary $_____

Administrative Assistant $_____

3. Personality Traits

Please check the five most important personality traits you look for during the first interview.

a. Grooming _____

b. Tactfulness _____

c. Appearance _____

d. Effective Communications _____

e. Self Confidence _____

f. Attitude _____

g. Maturity _____

h. Voice Quality _____

i. Earnestness _____

j. Sense of Humor _____

k. Loyality _____

l. Intelligent _____

m. Others _____

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Check the appropriate square	Clerk Recep.		Clerk Steno		Secretary		Administrative Assistant	
	Necessary	Desirable	Necessary	Desirable	Necessary	Desirable	Necessary	Desirable
Typing								
30-39 net works a minute								
40-49 net words a minute								
50-59 net words a minute								
60-69 net words a minute								
70+ net words a minute								
Shorthand								
40-59 words a minute								
60-79 words a minute								
80-99 words a minute								
100+ words a minute								
Ten-Key								
Limited Knowledge								
Proficiency								
Switchboard								
Telephone Techniques								
MTST Training								
Mag Card Training								
Transcribing Machine Training								
Duplicating Machine Training								
Personnel Management Course								
Business Law I (contracts, agencies, and bailment								
Records Management								
Alphabetic								
Numeric								
Geographic								
Subject								
Data Base Filing								
Capable of setting up filing system								

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	Clerk Recep.		Clerk Steno		Secretary		Administrative Assistant	
	Necessary	Desirable	Necessary	Desirable	Necessary	Desirable	Necessary	Desirable
Accounting								
High School Bookkeeping								
Accounting (college) 1 sem.								
Accounting (college) 2 sem.								
Accounting (more than 2 sem.)								
Education								
High School Diploma								
1 year college (secretarial)								
2 year college (secretarial)								
4 year college								
6 year college								
Years Experience								
0 years								
1-2 years								
3-5 years								
6-9 years								
10+ years								

Certified Professional Secretary

Are you familiar with the term of Certified Professional Secretary?
Yes_____ No_____

Do you have any Certified Professional Secretaries currently in your organization?
Yes_____ No_____ Unknown_____

Would you prefer an applicant to have attained the rank of Certified Professional Secretary:
Yes_____ No_____ Unknown_____

If an applicant with a CPS were available, would you offer such an individual a higher salary in contrast to an applicant without a CPS rank?
Yes_____ No_____

Additional Comments:

Other desired courses you feel an applicant should have:

Thank you for your time and effort.

DESCRIPTIONS OF OCCUPATIONS

Clerk/receptionist--Receives clients or customers coming into establishment, ascertains their wants, and directs them accordingly. May perform variety of clerical duties. May collect and distribute mail and messages.

Clerk/stenographer--Takes dictation in shorthand of correspondence, reports, and other matter, and transcribes dictated material, using typewriter. Performs variety of clerical duties. May transcribe material from sound recordings.

Secretary--Schedules appointments, gives information to callers, takes dictation. Reads and routes incoming mail. Locates and attaches appropriate file to correspondence to be answered by employer. Takes dictation in shorthand, transcribes. Composes and types routine correspondence. Files. Answers telephone and gives information to callers or routes call to appropriate official and places calls. Schedules appointments, greets visitors, and conducts visitors to employer. May arrange travel, compile and type statistical reports, supervise clerical workers, may keep personnel records, and record minutes of staff meetings.

Administrative Assistant--Aids executive by coordinating office services, such as personnel, budget preparation and control, housekeeping, records control, and special management studies. Studies management methods in order to improve workflow, simplify reporting procedures, or implement cost reductions. Analyzes operating practices, such as recordkeeping systems, forms control, office layout, suggestion systems, personnel requirements, and performance standards, to create new systems or revise established procedures. May assist in preparation of budget needs and annual reports of organization.

Note--These definitions of the four clerical positions accompanied the survey instrument.

APPENDIX B

Employer Preferences for Skills, Education and Experience for Clerical Staff Presented in Format of Survey Instrument

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TABLE 12

SKILLS, EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE PREFERENCES BY EMPLOYERS FOR A CLERK/RECEPTIONIST

Characteristics	Percentage of Employers Responding	
	Necessary	Desirable
Typing (words/min.)		
30-39	3%	7%
40-49	38	14
50-59	17	34
60-69	0	10
70+	0	3
Shorthand (words/min.)		
40-59	7	24
60-79	0	7
80-99	10	0
100+	0	7
Ten-Key		
Limited Knowledge	7	45
Proficiency	10	7
Switchboard	31	21
Telephone Techniques	59	21
MTST Training	3	14
Mag Card Training	0	10
Transcribing Machine Training	10	21
Duplicating Machine Training	1	31
Personnel Management Course	0	17
Business Law I (contracts, agencies, and bailment)	0	14
Records Management		
Alphabetic	3	28
Numeric	21	34
Geographic	7	21
Subject	17	24
Data Base Filing	3	10
Capable of setting up filing system	14	55
Accounting		
High School Bookkeeping	7	41
Accounting (college) 1 semester	3	3
Accounting (college) 2 semesters	3	0
Accounting (more than 2 semesters)	0	3
Education		
High School Diploma	86	3
1 year college (secretarial)	0	38
2 year college (secretarial)	0	10
4 year college	0	0
6 year college	0	0
Years Experience		
0 years	34	7
1-2 years	24	38
3-5 years	0	31
6-9 years	0	3
10+ years	0	3

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TABLE 13

SKILLS, EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE PREFERENCES BY EMPLOYERS FOR A CLERK/STENOGRAPHER

Characteristics	Percentage of Employers Responding Necessary	Desirable
Typing (words/min.)	4%	4%
30-39	12	0
40-49	40	20
50-59	16	20
60-69	0	8
70+		
Shorthand (words/min.)		
40-59	12	4
60-79	20	28
80-99	12	12
100+	4	8
Ten-Key		
Limited Knowledge	24	40
Proficiency	0	20
Switchboard	8	32
Telephone Techniques	40	40
MTST Training	8	20
Mag Card Training	4	16
Transcribing Machine Training	36	20
Duplicating Machine Training	24	24
Personnel Management Course	0	24
Business Law I (contracts, agencies, and bailment)	0	20
Records Management		
Alphabetic	44	12
Numeric	32	20
Geographic	8	24
Subject	16	20
Data Base Filing	4	16
Capable of setting up filing system	36	44
Accounting		
High School Bookkeeping	12	28
Accounting (college) 1 semester	4	20
Accounting (college) 2 semesters	0	4
Accounting (more than 2 semesters)	0	0
Education		
High School Diploma	80	0
1 year college (secretarial)	8	36
2 year college (secretarial)	4	20
4 year college	0	0
6 year college	0	0
Years Experience		
0 years	20	4
1-2 years	44	40
3-5 years	8	28
6-9 years	0	4
10+ years	0	4

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TABLE 14

SKILLS, EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE PREFERENCES BY EMPLOYERS FOR A SECRETARY

Characteristics	Percentage of Employers Responding Necessary	Desirable
Typing (words/min.)		
30-39	3%	0%
40-49	6	0
50-59	29	6
60-69	29	29
70+	13	19
Shorthand (words/min.)		
40-59	6	10
60-79	19	3
80-99	29	13
100+	10	29
Ten-Key		
Limited Knowledge	29	23
Proficiency	23	13
Switchboard	20	35
Telephone Techniques	55	29
MTST Training	3	23
Mag Card Training	6	6
Transcribing Machine Training	29	23
Duplicating Machine Training	29	29
Personnel Management Course	3	29
Business Law I (contracts, agencies, and bailment)	6	26
Records Management		
Alphabetic	55	23
Numeric	42	23
Geographic	19	23
Subject	23	19
Data Base Filing	3	19
Capable of setting up filing system	61	32
Accounting		
High School Bookkeeping	26	32
Accounting (college) 1 semester	0	29
Accounting (college) 2 semesters	3	0
Accounting (more than 2 semesters)	3	3
Education		
High School Diploma	61	3
1 year college (secretarial)	6	35
2 year college (secretarial)	13	16
4 year college	3	10
6 year college	0	3
Years Experience		
0 years	10	3
1-2 years	48	19
3-5 years	19	32
6-9 years	13	10
10+ years	0	13

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TABLE 15

SKILLS, EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE PREFERENCES BY EMPLOYERS FOR AN ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

Characteristics	Percentage of Employers Responding	
	Necessary	Desirable
Typing (words/min.)		
30-39	5%	0%
40-49	5	0
50-59	30	10
60-69	5	30
70+	10	15
Shorthand (words/min.)		
40-59	5	10
60-79	15	10
80-99	5	5
100+	0	25
Ten-Key		
Limited Knowledge	10	35
Proficiency	25	10
Switchboard	0	45
Telephone Techniques	40	40
MTST Training	0	25
Mag Card Training	10	10
Transcribing Machine Training	15	35
Duplicating Machine Training	20	35
Personnel Management Course	35	40
Business Law I (contracts, agencies, and bailment)	15	50
Records Management		
Alphabetic	35	35
Numeric	30	30
Geographic	15	30
Subject	25	20
Data Base Filing	10	25
Capable of setting up filing system	70	30
Accounting		
High School Bookkeeping	25	10
Accounting (college) 1 semester	5	15
Accounting (college) 2 semesters	10	15
Accounting (more than 2 semesters)	15	10
Education		
High School Diploma	65	0
1 year college (secretarial)	15	15
2 year college (secretarial)	0	25
4 year college	15	20
6 year college	0	0
Years Experience		
0 years	5	5
1-2 years	25	20
3-5 years	35	30
6-9 years	5	5
10+ years	5	20

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